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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Poland
SUBJECT Living Standards

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. The standard of the living of the urban populace has decreased very greatly since 1949. With one exception that goes for all Communist-dominated states. There is no unemployment. One should never forget that everybody is employed, but the general standard of living of an employed worker, an average citizen, has decreased. That is particularly true for the urban population. As for the rural population - the peasant has been the greatest resister throughout the centuries. He knows how to produce just enough to cover his own needs. Unless he is expelled for his farm and transferred to another region he knows how to produce just for himself. He may be willing to sell some part of what he had produced to somebody who comes from the city or to friends or relatives who want a few kgs of pork. Then too he or she may be interested in bartering. For example, if a friend or relative gets something nice like a babushka from a friend in the US or England, the peasant will be willing to exchange a few kgs of pork for the babushka.

2. Thirty-two per cent of Polish workers today are women - urban workers. That is an extremely high percentage. Economic conditions compel women to work to earn a living - the same as in the USSR.

3. Q. Are there any classes of the population that could consider themselves better off than in pre-war days?

A. You know the word - social promotion? I know some of the new managers of Polish factories, etc. I knew them before the war. These are in most cases people who never in their life could expect to be managers of anything. The Communists arrange that the manager has an assistant just to watch this manager. He feels himself to be the manager. There is somebody who has respect for his abilities. No other regime would discover his abilities but the Communists did. There is a group of men and women who are grateful to this regime, who like it because they have been promoted to posts they could not expect otherwise. They are shortsighted enough not to see that promotions must be carried on constantly so as to make place for the new people who climb up the social ladder, who have been outstanding in the Communist Party and are sincere Communists. They have to be removed periodically - some for political reasons, and some to make a place for other people. Young people, unknowns, who hold important positions disappear and new people get the posts. There is always a class which is satisfied, which is better off, and doing well.

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